

NOTES ON GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

**Mammalia, Marsupialia, Didelphidae,
Lestodelphys halli: New records, distribution
extension and filling gaps.**

Daniel Edgardo Udrizar Sauthier¹
Marcelo Carrera²
Ulyses Francisco José Pardiñas¹

¹Unidad de Investigación Geología y
Paleontología, Centro Nacional Patagónico
(CONICET). Almirante Brown s/n. 9210,
Puerto Madryn, Chubut, Argentina. E-mail:
dsauthier@cenpat.edu.ar

²Mitre 2310. 9120, Puerto Madryn, Chubut,
Argentina.

Lestodelphys halli (Figure 1), the southernmost
living Neotropical marsupial (Marshall 1977) is
also one of the least known representatives of this
group regarding geographic distribution, ecology,
and natural history. This species - endemic of
Argentina - ranges from the Province of Mendoza
in the north to the Province of Santa Cruz in the
south. Despite the wide area included, roughly

from 33° to 48° S, the recording localities
documented are scarce and discontinuous (Birney
et al. 1996; Pardiñas et al. 2003; Martin 2003;
2005).

We report here new recording localities of
Lestodelphys halli, hence filling gaps and
extending its geographic distribution eastward in
Central Patagonia.

The specimens were collected during summers of
2004, 2005 and 2006 in field trips carried out in
the Province of Río Negro, mainly in the
Somuncura plateau and in the Province of Chubut,
Chubut river basin. The studied specimens are
craniodental remains (Figure 2) recovered from
owl pellets (*Tyto alba* and *Bubo magellanicus*)
and two individuals trapped alive (Figure 1). The
osteological remains were identified using
reference material from the Colección de
Mamíferos (CNP) and Colección de Egagrópilas y
Afines “Elio Massoia” (CNP-E), both official
collections housed at the Centro Nacional
Patagónico, Chubut, Argentina. The new materials
referred in this contribution were deposited in
these collections.



Figure 1. *Lestodelphys halli* (male) trapped in north-western of the Province of Chubut.

NOTES ON GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

The new localities are (Figure 3):

New distributional records in previously known area of occurrence:

- 1- Cañadón de la Buitrera, Piedra Parada, Chubut (42°39'05" S, 70°06'11" W): CNP-E 8.
- 2- Near Estancia Cretón, Piedra Parada, Chubut (42°41'44" S, 70°01'33" W): CNP-E 124.
- 3- Estancia Cretón, Piedra Parada, Chubut (42°44'38" S, 70°03'18" W): CNP-E 122 and 123.
- 4- Estancia Cretón, Piedra Parada, Chubut (42°42' S, 70°02' W): CNP-E 39.

Filling gaps:

- 5- Puesto Machín, Río Negro (41°40'40" S, 69°24'05" W): CNP-E 101.
- 6- Cañadón Arroyo Quetrequile (41°41'49" S, 69°24'13" W): CNP-E 99.
- 7- Cañadón del Painemil, Río Negro (41°44'29" S, 69°22'05" W): CNP-E 100.
- 8- 2 km NW Gastre, Chubut (42°14' S, 69°12' W): CNP-E 57.
- 9- Campo Netchovitch, Fofó Cahuel, Chubut (42°19'42" S, 70°33'40" W): CNP-E 120 and two live specimens trapped.
- 10- Fofó Cahuel, Chubut (42°20'27" S, 70°28'05" W): CNP-E 116 to 119.
- 11- Cerro Gorro Frigio, Chubut (43°05'30" S, 69°19'23" W): CNP-E 40.
- 12- Estancia El Torito, Chubut (43°16'35,9" S, 69°08'29,5" W): CNP-E 121.
- 13- Near Cerro Cóndor, Chubut (43°23'20" S, 69°10'13" W): CNP-E 66.

Extension of distribution to the east:

- 14- Cerro Corona, Río Negro (41°27' S, 66°54' W): CNP-E 76.
- 15- Subida del Naciente, Río Negro (41°40' S, 67°09' W): CNP-E 27.
- 16- 4 km S Tres Banderas, Chubut (42°48'31" S, 68°00'56" W): CNP-E 75, and CNP 883 to 886.
- 17- Cañadón Carbón, Chubut (43°49'27" S, 67°51'04" W): CNP-E 92.
- 18- Los Altares, Chubut (43°50'40" S, 68°25'20" W): CNP-E 94.
- 19- Estancia Los Manantiales, Chubut (45°43'59" S, 67°28'59" W): CNP-E 83.
- 20- Astra, Chubut (45°44' S, 67°29' W): CNP-E 84.



Figure 2. Skull and mandible of *Lestodelphys halli*, CNP 885; scale = 10 mm.

These 20 recording localities are located in the Patagónica Phytogeographic Province (*sensu* León et al. 1998; Figure 3). Some of the new localities reported here are near to the Monte Phytogeographic Province (localities 14 to 19), but no recent record is known for this unit in Central Patagonia. This scenario suggests that *L. halli* is mainly restricted to the Patagonian steppe, although there are two known localities of occurrence at Monte Phytogeographic Province, in

NOTES ON GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Patagonia: Lihuel Calel (Province of La Pampa) and Choele Choel (north of the Province of Río Negro). These records could be considered relicts

of a wider distribution during Holocene times and could not reflect the optimal habitats where this species inhabit today.

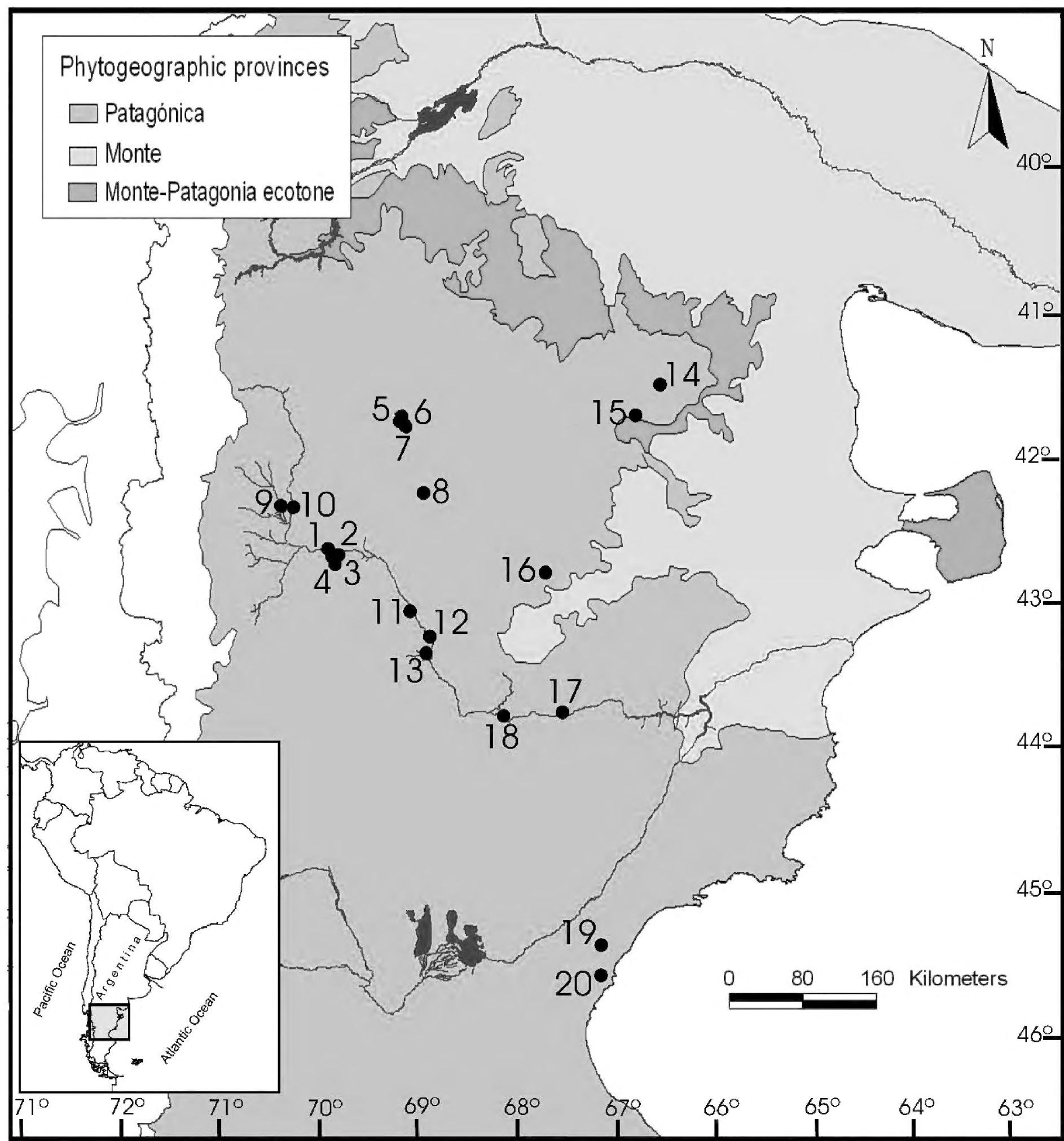


Figure 3. Map of Central Patagonia showing new recording localities for *Lestodelphys halli*.

NOTES ON GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Acknowledgements

The authors want thanks to A. Gomez, G. D'Elia, W. Udrizar Sauthier, A. Andrade, D. Voglino, P.

Wallace, P. Teta, and two anonymous revisers. CONICET provide economical support to D.E.U.S. and U.F.J.P.

Literature cited

- Birney, E. C., J. A. Monjeau, C. J. Phillips, R. S. Sikes, and I. Kim. 1996. *Lestodelphys halli*: new information on a poorly known Argentine marsupial. *Mastozoología Neotropical* 3(2): 171-181.
- León, R. J. C., D. Bran, M. Collantes, J. M. Paruelo, and A. Soriano. 1998. Grandes unidades de vegetación de la patagonia extra andina. Pp. 125-144, In M. Oesterheld, M. R. Aguiar, and J. M. Paruelo (ed.), *Ecosistemas patagónicos*. *Ecología Austral* 8(2).
- Marshall, L. G. 1977. *Lestodelphys halli*. *Mammalian Species* 81: 1-3.
- Martin, G. M. 2003. Nuevas localidades para marsupiales patagónicos (Marsupialia: Didelphimorphia y Microbiotheria) en el noroeste de la provincia del Chubut. *Mastozoología Neotropical* 10(1): 148-153.
- Martin, G. M. 2005. Intraspecific variation in *Lestodelphys halli* (Marsupialia: Didelphimorphia). *Journal of Mammalogy* 86(4): 793-802.
- Pardiñas, U. F. J., P. Teta, S. Cirignoli, and D. H. Podestá. 2003. Micromamíferos (Didelphimorphia y Rodentia) de norpatagonia extra andina, Argentina: taxonomía alfa y biogeografía. *Mastozoología Neotropical* 10(1): 69-113.

Received November 2006

Accepted May 2007

Published online May 2007